

Maryland State Highway Administration ADA Peer Exchange Summary Report

January 22, 2009

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INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has established a goal to go beyond compliance to full accessibility for all of its customers. As part of this effort, Maryland SHA embarked on a Self-Evaluation of accessibility on our Public Rights of Way and is developing a Transition Plan for retrofit projects. Additionally, Maryland SHA has also conducted training in three areas – general awareness, design, and construction. This training has been extended to many other groups including consultants/contractors, local jurisdictions, and other state Departments of Transportation (DOTs). Through these and other efforts it became increasingly apparent that representatives from the DOTs in the Mid-Atlantic region would benefit greatly from a peer exchange dealing specifically with ADA compliance in Public Rights-of-Way (PROW).

The objective of the Peer Exchange was to have representatives from the DOTs in the Mid-Atlantic area (Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and West Virginia) meet and share best practices and lessons learned regarding ADA accessibility in PROW (see Attachment A for Peer Exchange Participants). Prior to the peer exchange, a pre-meeting survey was sent to identify the participant's areas of interest (see Attachment B for Pre Meeting Survey). As a result, the following areas of interest were identified: Self Evaluation Data Collection, Lessons learned, Transition Plans and Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS). Representatives from Texas, Florida, and the City of Baltimore were also invited to share their experiences.

During the Peer Exchange, representatives from Maryland, Delaware, the District of Columbia, the City of Baltimore, Florida, and Texas met, received presentations and participated in open discussion on the four identified areas of interests. This report captures the main points, issues of concern and questions from the peer exchange.

A lot of interesting discussion occurred as a result of the peer exchange, including some valuable lessons learned and shared between the various agencies. Lessons learned that were shared between the states should prove to be beneficial as each State moves forward in their program. The Peer Exchange Schedule and Agenda, the ADA Peer Exchange Rating Sheet Results and Comments, and the Raw Notes from the Peer Exchange are included in Attachments C, D, and E, respectively.

Maryland SHA and the other participating agencies would like to thank the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the funding that made this valuable exchange possible.

SUMMARY OF MEETING PRESENTATIONS

As shown on the meeting agenda, there were several presentations included throughout the day to present the information and spark discussion. The presentations are outlined below.

Federal Perspective, Bob Cosgrove, Equal Opportunity Specialist, FHWA

Bob Cosgrove opened the meeting with a presentation on the Federal perspective towards ADA compliance. FHWA's role is to provide technical assistance and advice to the states; however, issues that require approval are not handled by FHWA. Currently, FHWA is working on developing guides for topics such as self evaluations and transition plans. The goal is to have the guides completed by mid 2009.

Bob mentioned the importance of making all programs and services accessible. He discussed issues such as making sure materials and publications, including websites, programs, services, and procedures are accessible to all users and available in alternative formats. In addition, the importance of scouting public meeting locations to ensure accessibility was expressed.

Bob cautioned the group that Transition Plans are **extremely** important and help to avoid lawsuits. Transition Plans should address and document the approach to correct deficiencies and compliance issues, as well as dedicate funding for projects and programs. They should be used as a tool to plan and project the use of funds and how projects will be implemented. He cited a lawsuit against Utah DOT regarding curb ramps that resulted in a settlement of \$1M/year for 10 years. Utah did not have a Transition Plan.

The self evaluation should document the review of all programs and activities for compliance and accessibility. These items include facilities, PROW, and policies. A general overview of non-compliant elements should be reflected in the self evaluation. The solutions to the non-compliant issues should be included in the document. Several examples of possible solutions were provided, including the relocation of programs to accessible facilities, offering programs in an alternative accessible manner, structural changes to provide program access, and policy modifications to ensure non-discrimination.

Self Evaluation and Data Collection, Norie Calvert, Lisa Choplin and John Gover, Maryland State Highway Administration

Norie Calvert gave an overview of Maryland SHA's process for data collection during the self evaluation. Using the State's video log and high resolution aerial photos, all sidewalks owned by Maryland SHA were located. The next step was data collection and a field evaluation, which was simplified as much as possible. Elements were identified as compliant, non-compliant or not applicable (N/A) and were inspected every

five feet. GPS handheld units were used to capture data which was later uploaded into Maryland SHA's GIS database. Storing this information in a GIS system allows for Maryland SHA to easily update their GIS database as non-compliant elements are made compliant. As an interesting side note, a walker was modified and used to assist in inspecting slopes so field personnel would not have to kneel down every five feet. The overall process took about 9 months to complete and did not include buildings. Approximately 25,000 curb ramps and 874 miles of sidewalk were inspected. Currently \$4 million is dedicated for ADA and includes design, construction, etc. The approximate cost for the data collection was \$200,000 and the estimated cost to fix all non-compliant elements is approximately \$120 million.

Keynote Speaker - Neil Pedersen, Maryland SHA Administrator

Neil Pedersen, Maryland SHA Administrator, spoke with the group regarding ADA issues and his role as both Administrator and AASHTO Subcommittee Chair for Standing Committee on Highways (SCOH). He explained that ADA issues arise regularly and they are currently developing a new strategic plan to address them. In addition, ADA issues will be a part of the roundtable discussions for both the upcoming spring and Annual AASHTO meetings.

Neil discussed that Maryland is one of the most multi-modal DOT's in the country. He also mentioned the importance of having support from the Governor and the Secretary of Transportation. Neil stated that policy support outside of the DOT is important to the success of the ADA program.

Neil addressed the seriousness of legal action that had been taken against Maryland SHA and the importance of addressing issues immediately. For example, initially Maryland SHA was waiting to receive Federal guidance on technology that was available in regards to Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) units and what they recommended for use. Neil then made a decision that over the next 10 years, Maryland SHA will replace all existing pedestrian traffic signals with APS units. Neil wanted Maryland SHA's approach to be more proactive than reactive. With the spirit and intent of ADA in mind, more so than the "letter of the law", a plan for full compliance was laid out in detail. Neil explained that the plan was created with all of SHA's customers in mind and using their input to put the plan into action.

Neil discussed the need to approach ADA initiatives from an asset management perspective. He advised that using this approach builds a case for funding and a rational decision-making basis. He referenced Maryland SHA's inventory as a valuable tool to make the case for the need for funding. Neil explained how the inventory highlighted the need to address non-compliant issues and the enormity of what still needs to be done.

Neil addressed the importance of having funds that are dedicated to ADA to address issues of non-compliance. He also stated that he has made ADA funding a high priority

(approximately \$6 million per year for retrofit program). He advised that DOTs should not to rely on ADA retrofit funding from larger construction projects. Neil stated that a lot of "lessons learned" came from settlements that occurred in other states.

Neil explained that funding issues are the biggest issues that states have been challenged with. He also mentioned how establishing ADA performance goals assisted with securing funding.

Neil believes that SCOH needs to address ADA issues. The last strategic plan is over 10 years old and no where in it does it address ADA. Neil stressed the importance of plans being living, working documents. He advised that these documents should be continually updated and amended as circumstances change.

Neil also spoke about the importance of involving management teams in the process of policy development, so they have ownership in program implementation. He also spoke about adding specific goals and measures in the business plan at Maryland SHA and how it ensures that everyone is working toward achieving the best possible results as far as ADA compliance is concerned. He referenced how ADA training has benefited the overall program among employees from top to bottom.

Elizabeth Hilton-Texas DOT

Elizabeth discussed how Texas approached its Transition Plan. The Plan focused only on curb ramps and no other elements. All districts surveyed needs within PROW in August 1992 and the information was compiled and submitted to Governor's Office in January 1993. The approach was to complete PROW improvements through a 3 year plan with \$37 million in funding. Elizabeth also explained that Texas is divided into districts. As a result, coordinating efforts can be challenging.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

An open group discussion facilitated by Harriet Levine of Jacobs ensued regarding various issues of concern. Below are several areas that were highlighted in the discussion. Additional raw data from the brainstorming is included as Attachment E.

Construction Tolerance. This area was identified as a major challenge for the States. The questions include what (if any) tolerance is set out by the states, how construction tolerances are checked and if they are checked on all projects, and what mechanisms do the state agencies have to enforce these tolerances with contractors. In a very interactive discussion, each state shared their policies and procedures. Again, there was a lot of variety in the experiences. Some states have a specified tolerance while others did not. Some states use consultant inspectors while others use all state employees.

Accessibility in Work Zones. This is a new area for some states. Some states require an accessible alternate path through construction zones with existing sidewalks while this is not a focus in other states. There was an interesting discussion on whether this would be required in instances where pedestrians use shoulder areas. The consensus of the group was that while pedestrians might use shoulders they are designed as shoulders, not pedestrian pathways, and are not being considered as subject to ADA design standards.

Sub Recipients. FHWA has advised some states that they need to oversee, to an extent, any agency for which it passes funding on projects. Other states have been told that they should have full oversight on all sub recipient work (along State and local roads) including review of design and inspection for full compliance. This would create a financial and time burden that the states are not set up to handle. This area was highlighted as one that needed further follow-up with FHWA as different answers are being given to different states concerning the level of oversight that is required on sub recipient projects.

DISCUSSION OF SELF EVALUATIONS AND DATA COLLECTION

Following the presentation by Norie Calvert, the group joined in an overall discussion of Self Evaluations and Data Collection. Norie shared some lessons learned as a result of the data collection. Other members of the peer exchange also shared their costs and/or budgets for ADA, if any, and lessons learned during their data collection activities and public outreach.

The group had an open discussion regarding FHWA input and guidance during the Self Evaluation. The items below are some of the highlights of the items captured during this segment of the open discussion.

- Clear guidance is needed from FHWA for the self evaluation. It was confirmed that the various states are receiving differing information from differing FHWA regional offices.
- One of the lessons learned by the various representatives was to look beyond the existing sidewalk system. For example, Maryland only identified bus stops along existing sidewalks. Based on what they know now, all bus stops would have been identified, regardless of the presence of a sidewalk.
- Centralized points of contact within an agency make it easier to ensure consistency.
 Texas and Florida are very decentralized, which makes it difficult to ensure consistency on the implementation of ADA.
- Gaining support from leadership is key.

DISCUSSION OF TRANSITION PLANS

Following the presentation by Elizabeth Hilton, the group joined in an overall discussion of Transition Plans. Transition plans should be considered living documents and should be adjusted based on circumstances. The approach to projects should be to group elements geographically with the areas that have the most high priority elements. They should not be approached as a priority of individual elements or corners, but grouped geographically or as a larger area.

The Transition Plan that was done for Texas (specifically for curb ramps) referenced a detailed plan. Individual projects were not listed in the Transition Plan.

The group agreed that it is difficult, if not impossible, to have one comprehensive Transition Plan for Policies, Facilities and Public Rights of Way (PROW). Although this is something Bob Cosgrove had mentioned in his presentation, none of the participants are doing this and thought it would actually delay the finalization of any transition plan.

A key point highlighted in this discussion is that each office administers their Transition Plan differently. As such, each Transition Plan is distinctly different.

GROUP FINDINGS/HIGHLIGHTS

Below are a key findings and highlights identified during the peer exchange:

- An open dialogue is needed between the states and FHWA.
- States need clear guidance from FHWA on the Self Evaluation process.
- The group agrees that it is almost impossible to have one comprehensive Transition Plan for policies, facilities and PROW.
- There are issues with ADA consistency both across states that may be decentralized in their structure as well as from one state to the next in terms of what they are being told from FHWA.
- Support of leadership is key to the success of a Transition Plan.
- Policy support from agencies/leadership higher than the state DOT is important.
- An asset management approach builds a case for funding.
- Performance goals can be a key to getting funding.
- Plans are living documents that need to be adjusted based on circumstances.
- Transition Plans should not be just a priority of individual elements or corners. They should group geographically larger areas.
- A Transition Plan should reference a detailed plan; individual projects do not have to be listed in the Transition Plan.

ISSUES, QUESTIONS, AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The list below identifies several areas of concerns in which states need more guidance:

- Baseline Assessment Result Summary for all states (not developed at this point)
- In regards to Transition Plans, it is difficult to pinpoint actual project improvements due to changing budget. What do we put on paper?
- Can Transition Plans be broken down into sections (policy, facility, PROW, etc.) to be completed independently?
- Are temporary construction facilities that are not open to the public ADA exempt?
- Problems in the area of interpretation of laws and standards
- Construction Tolerance How to set the number? How to enforce?
- Accessibility in Work Zones What are the requirements?
- Differing information given by FHWA to states concerning level of oversight of sub recipients
- FHWA Inconsistency Baseline Assessments
- Definition of alteration What is structural vs. non-structural resurfacing?



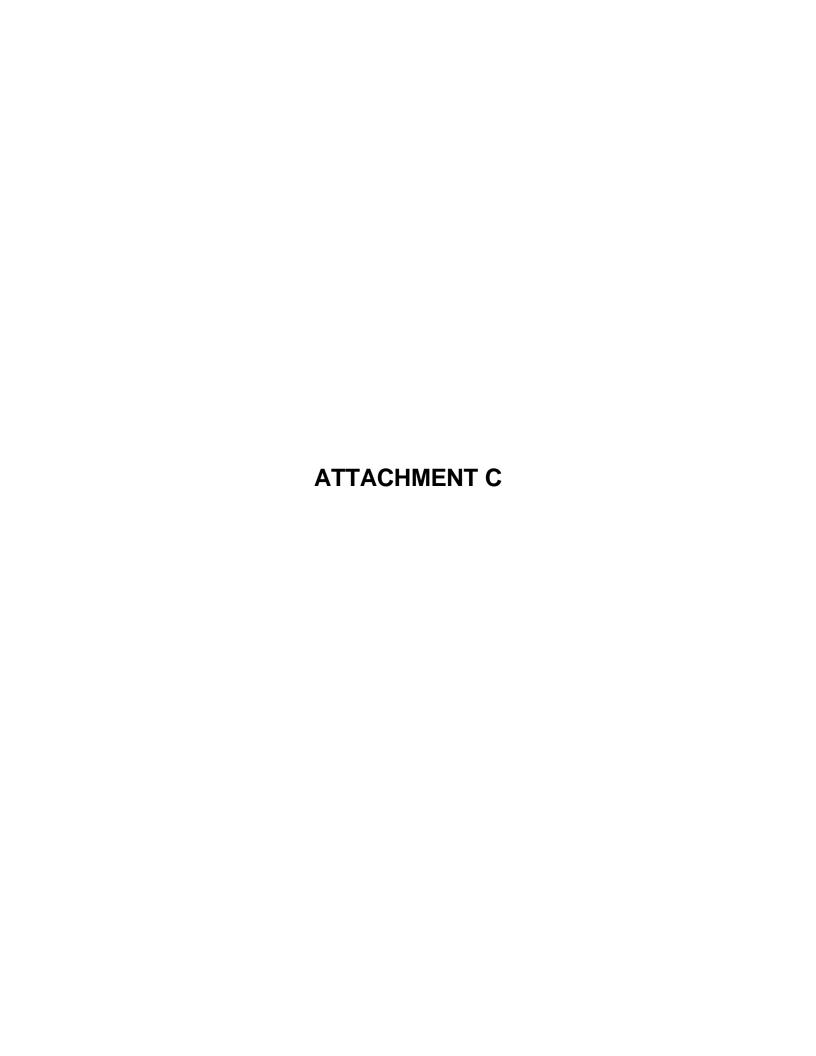
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Pre Meeting Survey

1.	Name and Title:					
2.	Where is the Title II coordinator located within the organization?					
3.	How does the Title II coordinator interact with other disciplines within the organization?					
4.	Who are the key players/ positions?					
5.	How long should this event be? 1 Day or 2 Days					
6.	Does your organization work with an ADA Advisory Group? If yes, how often do you meet? What topics are discussed?					
7.	How do you plan and organize Public Meetings i.e. format, attendees?					
8.	How is your agency handling sub-recipients?					
9.	Do you have a Self Assessment? If yes, please give a brief description?					
10.	Do you have a Transition Plan?If yes, please give a brief description					
11.	Are you available any of the following dates: (Please check all that apply) Cotober 22, 2008 November 3, 2008 November 6, 2008 If not, list available dates:					
12.	Please check any of the topics below that are of interest: APS Complaint process Lessons learned Self-evaluation Self-evaluation Sub-recipients Technical guidelines Transition Plan					



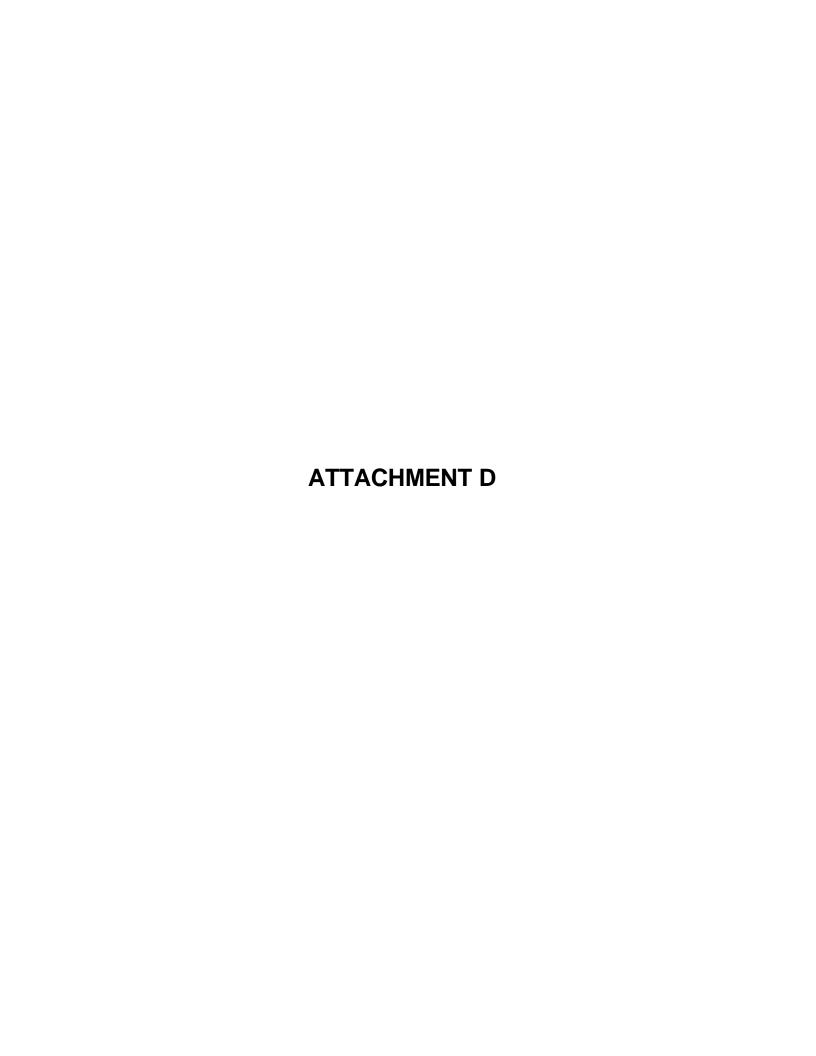
Peer Exchange Schedule and Agenda

Wednesday, November 5, 2008

Dinner with SHA Staff and Peer Exchange participants at the Conference Center 6:30

Thursday, November 6, 2008

8:00 – 8:25	Welcome - Linda Singer Federal Perspective - Bob Cosgrove, FHWA
8:30 – 9:00	Self Evaluation Data Collection - Maryland State Highway Office of Highway Development
9:00 – 9:45	Q&A and Discussion
9:45 – 11:15	Issues and Challenges (Peer Group)
11:15 – 11:30	Break
11:30 -12:15	Transition Plan - Elizabeth Hilton, Texas DOT ADA Portal Demo - Maryland State Highway Office of Highway Development
12:15 – 1:00	Q&A and Discussion
1:00 – 1:45	Lunch Neil Pedersen, Administrator, Maryland State Highway Administration Open Discussion
1:45 – 2:30	APS and Demo - Ed Paulis, Maryland State Highway Administration, Office of Traffic and Safety APS Q&A
2:30 – 4:00	General Discussion and Wrap Up



ADA Peer Exchange Rating Sheet Results and Comments

Each participant was a given an ADA Peer Exchange Rating Sheet to comment and rate the event in the following 5 categories, using a 5 point scale with one being the lowest and 5 the highest (see attached ADA Peer Exchange Rating Sheet):

- 1. Communication
- 2. Teamwork
- 3. Format and Content
- 4. Networking
- 5. Follow Up

In the area of communication the group rating was a four (4) which reflected the group experienced open and honest communication among the group during the event. One comment was given that there was "very good interactive and informed discussion".

Teamwork received a group rating of 3.6 which reflected that the group encourages all of its members to participate almost always. One comment given regarding teamwork was that "quieter people need to be drawn out more."

Format and content was rated 3.4 by the group which reflected the format and content of the ADA Peer Review more than met expectation. There were two comments given regarding format and content. The first comment was "very good information sharing". The second comment was "too much general conversation, need to focus on more specific issues".

Networking received a 3.3 rating from the group which reflected the relationships and contacts established during the ADA Peer Review will be used very often.

Finally in the area of Follow up, the group rating was 3.6 which reflected a follow up meeting to discuss additional issues and/or address issues in further detail would be very useful. The two comments given stated, "FHWA should sponsor regional or national meetings like this" and, "great meeting could use more participation by other states. Unfortunate that Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania did not attend."

Final general comments were, "thanks for the invitation" and "this was a great opportunity to network with other DOT's and share information. I would like to see additional meetings in the future".

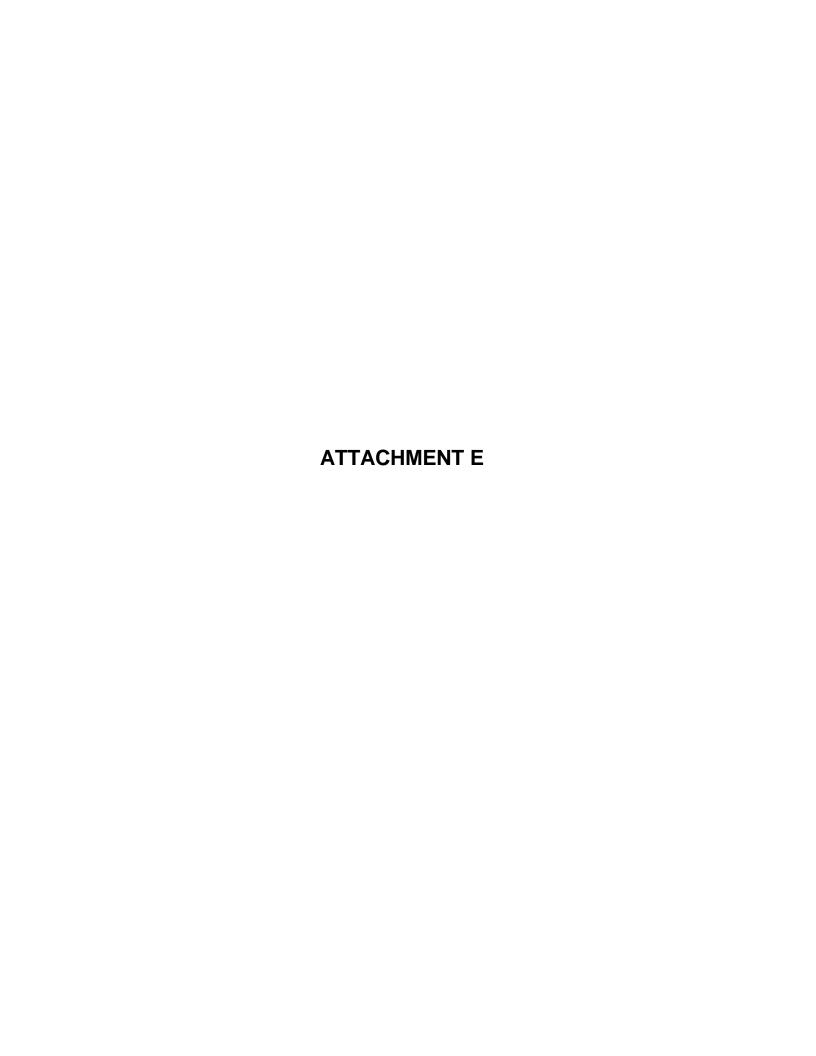
Overall, the group found this to be a valuable and informative meeting. Additional emails and calls regarding more specific information obtained from the peer exchange have also been received.

ADA Peer Exchange Rating Sheet

STANDARD EVALUATION ELEMENTS

Circle Rating for Each Element

(1) Communication	Non-Existent	Cautious/Guarded	Meeting Needs	Open/Free	I don't know
Open and honest communication among the group was:	1 Comments:	2	3	4	N/A
(2) Teamwork	Never	Infrequently	Often	Always	I don't know
The group encourages all of its members to participate:	1 Comments:	2	3	4	N/A
(3) Format and	Did not meet expectation	Somewhat met expectation	Met expectation	Exceeded expectation	I don't know
Content The format and content of the ADA Peer Review:	1 Comments:	2	3	4	N/A
(4) Networking	Never	Infrequently	Often	Always	I don't know
Relationships/contacts established during the ADA Peer review will be used:	1 Comments:	2	3	4	N/A
(5) Follow up	Would not be useful	May be useful	Would be useful	Would definitely be useful	I don't know
A follow up meeting to discuss additional issues and/or address issues in further detail:	1 Comments:	2	3	4	N/A
(6) Other Comments					



AASHTO Significammittee on highways

ADA issues keep coming up

how do we engage this topic

new strategic plan under development

Policy support from higher than Dot

Is important

asset mgmt. approach - builds case of funding rational decision making basis good inventory

unvolving disability groups

tegal mandate

Performance goal key to getting finding

Complete streets - recognize 5 modes

(auto, truck, pad, bike, transit)

all users of system

Plans - living documents, adjust based on circumstances

leadership - unvolve mgmt, team in developing process -> ownership in program/implementation

not just priority of individual elements or corners >> group geographicly, larger area typical not to do detailed design

transition plan - reference detailed plan Individual projects not listed in TP

level of detail varies from State to state

reporting frequency to FHWA varies
FL, TX-annual MD-guarterly

"technically feasible" hard to define

APS - proper placement of push button is

problematic

training is key

· ADA.GOV rg1 .Transition Plans-good progress · FHWA - "Baseline Assessments (4/1) stakes) · helping states 3) technical assistance · Individual Project ?5/concerns go through FHWA Regional/Division (not 1806) open dialogue between states : Bob How To " Pamphlets (~ 5 pages) - Hid 2009 being developed by FHWA (transition plans etc) Give comments to Bob mid-Dec that he can include in booklet · Baseline Assessment Results Summary & for all states — not developed at this point · 101. Programs 901. Public Rights of Way · 2005 Utah DOT lawsuit (our ramps) settlement | million yr for loyears Transition Plans-very important
—helps avoid lausuits 'ADA Anmendments Act - expands definition of disabled person

· THE II Ammendments-may happon soon

- Service animals

Transition Plan - difficult to prin point actual project improvement due to budget changing. What do we put on paper?

SHA says 2:1. Improvement/yr.

4 Bob says highlight Non-Compliant who, what, when, where, why

·Undue Burden - Often difficult situation
- difficult b define

· Need to have a Coordinator (ADA/504)

- sub-coordinators are helpful -have a committee.

Self-Zvaluation - teassibility

Policies i Procedures

Communications

· One document or broken in DIECES?

4 | Document for Transition Plan
2 Separak documents for
1- Blags | facilities
5e1f-Evaluation 2- Prov

Bellevie, Washington - used Soyway in scif-Evaluation

Pg 2 Self-Evaluation-Data Collection

). used VisiData to Identify locations (: aerials)

2) field evaluations: compliant or not (or Na) (no extras) - keep it simple

· 4 · 5 ' · less than 4'

·inspected every 5' · used a walker to Inspect slopes

o went to handheld units so it could be uploaded to state 415 system

25,000 curb ramps (25/compliant), not including)

· 9 months process data collection (buildings (2006) County by County \$200,000 sport

· 200% Facility Reviews undermay

Lesson Learned - no curb ramp labeled non-compliant ghould've labeled "NO RAMP"

· Bryth p fix All - 120 million

-4 million ADA Budget Allis Year (Nessan construction etc)

500 million in repairs in TX needed

- 415 million Curb Ramp Improvement Budget for construction

- & millon consultant doing ADA (TX)

794

MD updaked all standards etc.
 6 found contractors were NOT following proper standards. more training and seeing an improvement

·TX - contractor ripped out 200k bad sidewalk

· Self-Evaluation: Need Clear Guidance

Del- no MD- yes FL-facilities Balt- NO TX- Yes

· Lesson Learned-(talk w/ FHWA division of you have \$?)

LAND only identified Bus stops of sidewoolks - would be gotton located all bus stops

- · Did you collect data for sidewalks on connecting sidewalk? MD-not specifically but can identify gaps using aerial information
- · 1/2 mile radius from school, hospital etc to evaluate

NCHRP- Asset Management-completed Oct 2008 Summanzes ~6 local govt self evaluation process

Group types it is difficult/almost impossed to have 1 completions we Transition Plan for Missis Facultus & PROW *

- FL found it helpful getting input & asst. from FHWA, made them feel comfortable about what they were doing.
 - · Important to have commitment from top of the agency. Leadership buy-in important to progress.
 - · Problems in area of interpretation of law standards
 - · Centralized Point of Contact makes it easier to make sure things are consistent
 - · TX 4 FL very de-centralized and makes it

difficult for ADA consistency every project over 50,000 (this helps w/ consistency)

. Support of Leadership is key

· MD - Design Walver - requires approval of Director FL- Variations/exceptions process (Director Approval) TX- DISKNOWS can sign-off

MD holds off until PSE checklist signed off on ADA compliance

- ·TX advertised in TX Register advertising public outreach for Self Eval. / Transition Plan
- · TX Grievance | Complaint Process handled through Civil Rights Dept.
- · FL website of contact Info; Reg. Public Hearings
- -Bathmore · Advocacy Reps. on Transition Plan
- · Delaware addresses complaints I grievances
- · MD has Advisory Committee Broader Range of Topics
 - Pudic Mtgs @ all 23 counties
 - Website -dedicated ADA Phone Line

Lesson Learned - rather than 23 Public Meetings, just had periodic meetings wil Local commussions on Disabilities

- Secretary's Conference addressing all Transit/Disabilities
- -MD has a Dept. of Disabilities
- FL Governor's Commission on Disabilities (clearing house)

Issues | Unit lenges

Delaware? - Construction Tolerance - now did you set the number?

- · MD has 11- rule > talked with construction Staff and Access Board (Access Board his not approved)
- · 2.1. 15 still the standard
- · less than 31 won't be ripped up
- · Set forms @ 42% to allow for shifting
- ·Training is key
- Access Board will come out with a decision
- . 2011. consultant inspector staff
- · Focus on 12:1 ratio for ramp

ex. 8" curb - 8' ramp

Access Board approved for Alteration

· Field Staff's responsibility to make sure its compliant (not HQ)

· 3.1. folerance is spec'd out
· state inspectors inspect (all state employers)
· All ramps are inclinationly designed @ 8.3.1. 1888

· Tex Passibility Inspection (separate agency)
Accessibility

Aware Field vortication of everything (not specific to ADA)

Del bot i consultant Staff

FL inspectors inspect as it is under construction (not specific to 404) mostly consultants

* Accessibility in Work 2 one

FL- Accessible Alternate Path regid where existing sidewalk is allowed to close lanes if necessary for peas

MD- same as FL; Peds are allowed on shoulders when no sidewalk exists; on road when no shoulder. MD is not providing atternate path to shoulder troad re-pairing

Delaware- FHWA said no to individual project Para-transit (no reason why)
TX- not doing too much with Work Zones right now

FL- has more cases with lighted barriers or barriers with audible sounds (recent development)

* Sub-Recipient

- -FHWA says MD has to oversee to an extent any agency that MD passes \$6 down to - Are states doing anything?
- FL- inspects sub-recipients whon on state road only

 FHWA nailed them and said FL should have tall oversight

 on all Sub-recipient (need to inspect) work (state road or local; all
- Different Answers given to States projects)

 Depending on FHWA interviewer for Baseline Assessments

 Concerning level of oversight of

 Sub-recipients
 Follow up with Bob Cosgrey(3)

. FHWA Inconsistency - Baseline Assessments

Definition of Alteration

Glifficult to define -MD

FL-currently defining maintenance resurfacing

VS. resurfacing

Lao curb

ramps for maint resurf. proj.

. What is structural vs non-structural resurfacing